



Why Mahatma Gandhi changed the world forever

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to understanding the concept of "persistence in truth" (satyagrahi), developed by Mahatma Gandhi in the process of combating English racism and colonialism, why he changed the world.

Keywords:

Mahatma Gandhi, India, philosophy, politics, satyagraha, "persistence in reality".

Today, researchers in Uzbekistan are conducting research in different periods of history.

October 2, 2022 marks the 153rd anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth. He started out as a failed lawyer and by the end of his life had become a spiritual mentor to freedom fighters around the world. He talks about how Gandhi became a Mahatma, where his teachings came from and why he was killed by three bullets at point blank range.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in 1869 in the port city of Porbandar in western India. He came from an influential family belonging to the Banya caste, the upper class of Vaishyas, that is, merchants and farmers. Gandhi's father served as the Prime Minister (dewan) of the princely state of Porbandar.

A humble guy from an intelligent family

The boy was greatly influenced by his mother, who was very religious even by Indian standards. Mohandas spent his childhood in interminable fasting, daily visits to temples, reading the holy texts together. Later, all this influenced the formation of Gandhi's doctrine,

his political and religious-philosophical teachings.

At the age of 13, Mohandas' parents married off a girl of his own age named Kasturbai. In 1888, at the age of 19, Gandhi went to London on the advice of a family friend, where he studied to become a lawyer for three years.

Studying in the imperial capital was expensive, his father had died by then, and the Gandhi family was experiencing financial difficulties. Mohandas sold his wife's jewelry to buy a boat ticket. Three years in London were not easy for him. Observing strict vegetarianism, he ate mainly bread and spinach, because there was no money for other vegetable products. Reading helped Mohandas toughen his character and overcome his natural shyness.

After becoming a barrister at the Inner Temple, Gandhi returned to India and opened a practice in Bombay. He lost the first job, and success did not come to him in further tests.

Mohandas in Africa

In 1893, through his brother, Gandhi received an offer: to work in the trading company of

Muslim merchant Dada Abdullah in South Africa. The engineer agreed. There was a large Indian diaspora in South Africa. The whites referred to Indians as "blacks", a sign of apartheid. Rights of African Indians were restricted from transportation to property matters.

Gandhi served in the army and saw the horrors of the Anglo-Boer War. This experience influenced the formation of his concept of violence.

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Photo: author unknown

With a reputation as a brilliant lawyer who was trusted to do business not only by Indians but also by whites, Mohandas became an influential member of the diaspora. He formed the Indian Congress of the colony of Natal and openly discussed his ideas of fighting inequality with anyone who was willing to listen to him.

Gandhi succeeded in turning tens of thousands of Hindus into a single political force that the colonial power could not ignore. The Natal Indian Congress collected ten thousand signatures on a petition against an uncollectible capitation tax of 25 per annum on Indians and sent it to the Colonial Office in London and the Viceroy of India. Tax cut³.

Principles of non-violent struggle

Gandhi called his doctrine of struggle against oppression "satyagraha", which means "truthful determination" in Sanskrit. The concept was based on three main principles: civil disobedience, non-cooperation and, most importantly, non-violence.

According to Gandhi, violence is the epitome of irrationality, even the enemy should be dealt with indifferently and without enmity, and in response to his aggression, it is necessary to maintain self-control. In order to have such strength of spirit, Gandhi took a vow of chastity, led a Spartan lifestyle, fasted for a long time. These beliefs soon became his serious political weapon.

According to Gandhi, civil disobedience was the willful violation of unjust laws. The punishment

for this, whether it was arrest or deprivation of liberty, had to be patiently endured.

Non-cooperation means ceasing all ties with the unjust system of government, including dismissal from public service, renunciation of titles and titles, and boycott of courts, schools, and administrative institutions. Finally, non-cooperation meant refusing to buy the goods produced by the oppressive economy.

Gandhi first called South African Indians for satyagraha, a tactic of non-violent struggle, in 1906. thousand in Natal and Transvaal thousands of people left their jobs, organized peaceful rallies and strikes. Mohandas was often arrested, but then released: his influence on people was great.

As a result, Indians achieved relaxation of discriminatory laws. The news of the victories of the protest movement was widely covered in England and gradually Gandhi became known all over the world. In 1915, he and his family returned to India and spread his teachings at home.

Gandhism as a doctrine had several sources. Hindu religious texts were the main ones. From there the concept of ahimsa or "non-violence" is derived. Leo Tolstoy was also influenced by Gandhi's teachings. Mohandas corresponded with him and supported his ideas of non-violence and forgiveness of evil.

"I received your opinion of the Indian magazine and was happy to learn everything written there about those who do not resist. [...] I live now when I feel the proximity of living death, and especially now, I therefore a particularly clear feeling and what I want to convey to others is, in my opinion, of great importance, that is, the doctrine of love, untainted by false interpretations, that what is called non-contradiction, but which is essentially nothing else . [...] ...Your activity in the Transvaal, as it seems to us at the end of the world, is the most central, the most important of all that is going on in the world today, and in which not only Christendom, but the peoples of every world will inevitably participate."

Gandhi presented his ideas as if he were delivering sermons. He prophesied "the victory of truth, the victory of truth, the victory of truth by the forces of soul and love" and called on his

followers to "follow the truth, the power of truth, the power of love, the power of the soul." This made him a political figure, but a spiritual leader.

After returning to India, Gandhi was taught the principles of satyagraha at the Sabarmati ashram (community) near Ahmedabad.

In 1915, the famous Indian writer and Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore called Gandhi "Mahatma", which means "great soul". Mohandas is permanently assigned this title.

In March 1919, the British Indian administration passed the Rowlett Act, which gave the Governor-General extraordinary powers. Any Indian suspected of loyalty to the Empire could be arrested and imprisoned without trial. In response, Gandhi announced a nationwide satyagraha. He traveled the country calling for non-violent resistance to British tyranny.

On April 13, 50 soldiers opened fire on a crowd of protesters in Amritsar, killing hundreds of people, mostly women and children. After this massacre, Gandhi became a staunch opponent of the British Empire.

The economy of violence

In 1920, the Mahatma again announced an all-India satyagraha, calling on his countrymen to boycott the imperial textile monopoly. All cotton from Indian plantations was taken to England, where it was made into cloth and then sold to Indians at exorbitant prices. Fabric production was banned in India itself.

Since then, the spinning wheel has become a symbol of the national liberation struggle. Hundreds of thousands of followers of Gandhism started weaving at home and selling the cloth themselves. The Mahatma believed that handicrafts, especially hand weaving, would enable the country to achieve economic independence. Gandhi called it "economy without violence."

The Salt Company was a continuation of this policy. A British Act passed in 1882 gave the colonial authorities a monopoly on the collection and production of salt in India. In April 1930, Gandhi and his closest followers walked 400 kilometers from Sabarmati to the abandoned salt works near the village of Dandi

on the Arabian Sea coast to evaporate salt in violation of colonial law. News of the action spread throughout India, and tens of thousands of Indians began illegally evaporating salt.

After the Salt Company, Gandhi ended up in Pune's Yerwada Jail. As a protest leader, he was a frequent visitor there, although he never stayed long. And this time, the Mahatma made a deal with the colonial authorities: all political prisoners were released in exchange for stopping the nationwide campaign of disobedience.

In 1932, Gandhi launched a campaign against the discrimination of the lower caste - "untouchables". He called them "Harijans" and "Children of God".

Letters to Hitler and World War II

Mahatma Gandhi corresponded with many people, including Tolstoy, Einstein and Hitler. Mahatma Gandhi corresponded with many people, including Tolstoy,

Gandhi to Adolf Hitler twice - in July 1939, the second wrote a letter on the eve of the World War and in December 1940. He twice called on the Nazi leader to end the war, and both times addressed him as "dear friend", for which he was later repeatedly criticized.

"The fact that I am addressing you as a friend is not a mere formality. I have no enemies. For 33 years, my life has been to attract the friendship of all mankind, regardless of race, color or religion. [...] We thank you for your courage and we do not doubt that you are devoted to your country, nor do we believe that you are the beast that your opponents paint you to be."

From Gandhi's letter to Hitler, 1940

However, at that time the World Community was not yet aware of all the atrocities of the Nazi regime. Both letters went unanswered.

On the one hand, Gandhi openly condemned fascism and Nazism. On the other hand, he urged his countrymen not to support the British in the war. In 1942, the Mahatma in Mumbai called on the Hindus not to cooperate with the authorities and demanded that the British leave India. Immediately after this speech, Gandhi, his wife and leaders of the Indian National Congress (INC) were arrested.

Gandhi's imprisonment lasted two years. His wife died in prison of an exacerbation of bronchitis in February 1944, and the Mahatma himself contracted malaria. In May, he was released due to critical health conditions - authorities realized that a death in prison could lead to new riots.

At the end of the war, in agreement with the colonial authorities, Gandhi called on his followers to end the war in exchange for the release of more than 100,000 political prisoners.

The price of freedom

In 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru, one of the leaders of the INC, the future Prime Minister of India and a disciple of Gandhi, received a mandate from the British to form a national government. All India Muslim League (All India Muslim League) leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah advocated for an independent Pakistan to secede from India. Gandhi was a staunch opponent of such a division.

Jinnah called upon the Muslims to hold a day of direct action. On August 16, a mass rally was held in Calcutta in support of the idea of secession. The action was accompanied by pogroms and mass murders, more than 4 thousand people died. This led to the beginning of violent conflicts between Hindus and Muslims in Bengal.

Gandhi and his followers marched across the region calling for an end to the bloodshed and the partition of the country. This campaign had no effect. On August 15, 1947, India and Pakistan received the status of two separate dominions. Clashes in the border areas have not stopped. In October 1947, a territorial dispute over the ownership of Jammu and Kashmir erupted into the first Indo-Pakistani war.

The Mahatma, who was living in New Delhi at the time, went on a hunger strike for several days to protest the violence.

Traditionalists have long disliked Gandhi for his ostentatious support of the lower castes and his reception of Muslim delegations. In addition, the radicals claimed that Gandhi had led to the partition of India by preaching "anti-national" peace.

In January 1948, the first attempt on his life took place. Extremists hurled a homemade bomb into a crowd gathered in a park near the spiritual leader's home to listen to his speech. After the incident, Gandhi was asked to improve security and refrain from speaking in public, but he refused, and a second attempt was made at the same place 10 days later.

For most of that day, January 30, Gandhi worked at home on proposals for a draft Constitution. In the evening, accompanied by his nephew, he went to the park for public prayer. A man from the crowd who greeted the Mahatma approached him and shot him three times.

The killer turned out to be the nationalist Nathuram Godse. He was pinned in place, preventing him from taking his own life. Godse was sentenced to death by hanging. Gandhi's belief that violence and cruelty had been brought to his homeland by the British and that India, with its ancient culture, could become a peaceful country, was not justified.

Legacy of Mahatma

Gandhi's philosophy changed political practice forever, demonstrating to humanity the efficacy of peaceful protest, nonviolent struggle, and passive resistance. His ideology inspired subsequent generations of politicians around the world, from Martin Luther King (USA) and Nelson Mandela (South Africa) to Aung Suu Kyi (Myanmar).

Today, there are monuments and memorials of Mahatma in many cities of the world. His birthday - October 2 - was declared by the UN as the international day of non-violence.

From Leo Tolstoy's reply to Mohandas Gandhi, 1910

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